



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Brussels,

Dear

Thank you for your e-mail of 1 May 2019 (Int. Ref. ARES (2019)2928347) asking whether “*UV-light could be applied during postharvest in organic horticultural products*” and for the additional information you provide with e-mail of 17 July 2019 (Internal reference *Ares(2019)4635351*) related to the application of “*UV-B (280–315 nm) irradiation in vegetables after harvest in order to prevent their decay caused by fungi*” and asking whether it could be used for organic products and whether *UV-C (100–280 nm)* could be used.

First of all, to reply to your question, I will bring to your attention that ionising radiation is prohibited in the treatment of organic food and feed or other raw materials used in organic food or feed under Article 10 of Regulation (EC) No 834/2007¹. Consequently, the assessment on whether the use of UV-light of different wave-lengths could be allowed in organic production must be duly assessed.

I would bring to your attention the provisions of Article 5 (b) of organic Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 which establishes that organic farming shall be based, among others, on the following specific principle: “*(b) the minimisation of the use of non-renewable resources and off-farm inputs;*” and “*(f) the maintenance of plant health by preventative measures, such as the choice of appropriate species and varieties resistant to pests and diseases, appropriate crop rotations, mechanical and physical methods and the protection of natural enemies of pests;*”.

The Commission has the possibility to ask the group of experts for technical advice on organic production (EGTOP) for an opinion as to the compatibility of any technique with the objectives, criteria and principles of organic production. This occurred in the past with respect to the use of UV.

I would recall the conclusions of the report of the Expert Group for Technical Advice on Organic Production (EGTOP) concerning Plant Protection Products published in 2011 where the group concluded: “*that the use of this technique is not prohibited under the*

¹ Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 of 28 June 2007 on organic production and labelling of organic products and repealing Regulation (EEC) No 2092/91. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:02007R0834-20081010&qid=1396976187958&from=EN>

current organic regulation. However, the Group recommends that UVC should not be used in the field or greenhouse until the absence of sub-lethal mutagenic effects on micro-organisms (both target and non-target) is clearly demonstrated.”

The report is available at the following address:

https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/egtop-reports-organic-production_en

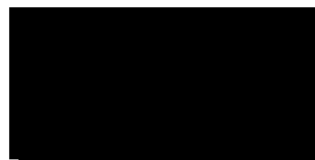
Consequently, using certain UV radiations at the end of the production cycle as a postharvest treatment in horticulture should be thoroughly examined, whether in line with the objectives and principles of organic production laid down in Regulation (EC) No 834/2007.

However, this can be done only after a complete request is submitted to the European Commission by one of the EU Member States. Therefore, I would recommend you to contact a national competent authority in organic production. The list of competent authorities is available here:

https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/farming/organic-farming/becoming-organic-farmer/organics-country_en

The present opinion is provided on the basis of the facts as set out in your e-mails of 1 May 2019 and 17 July 2019 and expresses the view of the Commission services and does not commit the European Commission. In the event of a dispute involving Union law it is, under the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, ultimately for the European Court of Justice to provide a definitive interpretation of the applicable Union law.

Yours sincerely,

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